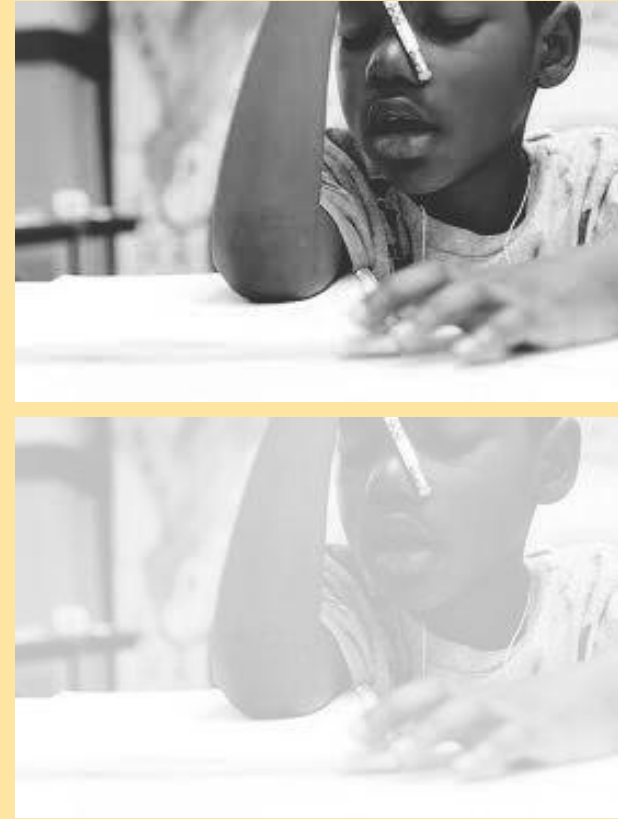# Welcome

Why are Young African American Boys "Struggling" to be Ready for School?

Birth to Three Institute

July 28, 2014

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Who is Here?

- Parents

- Education Managers

- Family Engagement Managers

- Teachers

- Family Engagement Staff

- Home Visitors

- Directors

- Other?

Ground Rules

- Take care of your needs/place cell phones on mute

- Speak from your own experience instead of generalizing

- Respectfully challenge

- Be conscious of body language and nonverbal responses — they can be as disrespectful as words

- Allow others to finish their statements

- Be flexible — suspend certainty

- The goal is not to agree — it is to gain a deeper understanding

- Participate to the fullest of your ability — community growth depends on the inclusion of every individual voice

- "Vegas Rule" (Maintain Confidentiality)

- Enjoy yourself!

Agenda

✓ Review OHS's Approach to School Readiness.

✓ Review current research and the societal and learning climate challenges facing African American boys.

✓ Examine our own assumptions, beliefs, and perceptions concerning African American boys.

✓ Explore culturally responsive caregiving, teaching and program strategies.

Office of Head Start National Center on Cultural and Linguistic Responsiveness (NCCLR)

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EDC Learning transforms lives.

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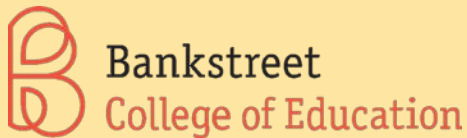
NCCLR Approach

- Focus on training cultural competence through theory, research, and concrete strength-based strategies

- Focus on positive development of young children living in poverty

- Focus on individual differences within group (to reduce bias and stereotyping)

- Focus on family strengths and assets using the *OHS Revised Multicultural Principles* as the foundation of our work
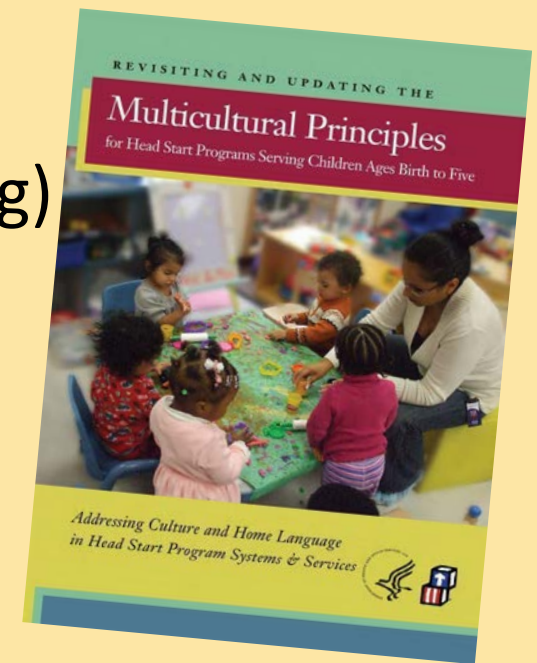
Child and Family Outcomes

Early Head Start National Resource Center's Mission

EARLY HEAD START
National Resource Center™

Building capacity throughout the early care and education community by providing:

High quality resources;

Training

Professional development opportunities

Technical Assistance

Designed to support programs serving expectant parents, infants, toddlers, and families

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Responsiveness

Setting the Context

Defining Infant Mental Health

- The developing capacity to experience, regulate and express emotions;

- Form close and secure interpersonal   relationships; and

- Explore the environment and learn.

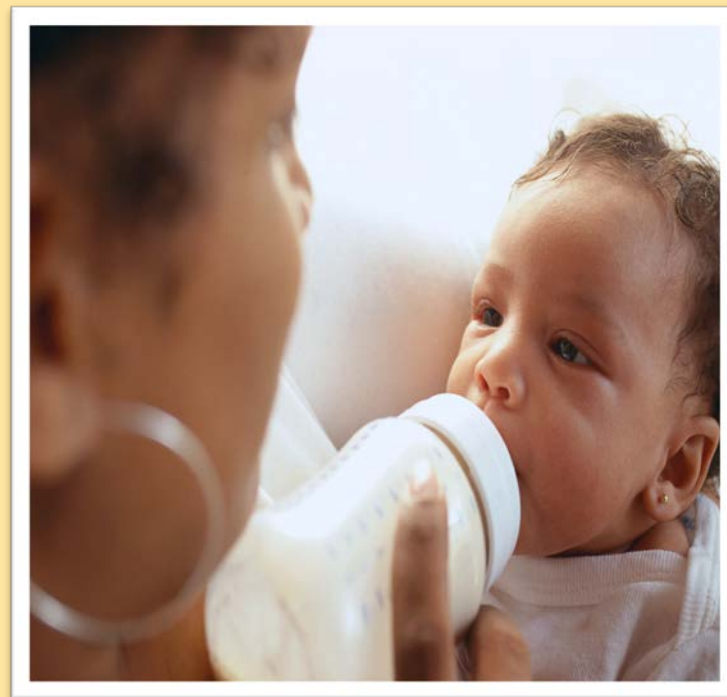- Infant Mental Health is synonymous with healthy Social and Emotional Development.

Photo courtesy Microsoft©

(ZERO TO THREE Infant Mental Health Task Force, 2001)

What is attachment?

© Photo courtesy of K.Diamond-Berry

Attachment…

- … the emotional connection children form with their parents and primary caregivers

  (Early Moments Matter, http://www.earlymomentsmatter.org/)

- …the balancing system to keep the child safe as they follow their desires to explore

  (Bowlby, John. Attachment. New York: Basic Books, pgs. 239, 338, 1982.)

Attachment…

- Begins in pregnancy

- Is biologically driven

- Forms, in part, by how an adult responds and interacts with a child

- Is how we describe the relationship between a child and a significant adult in his life

What is School Readiness?

- The original goal of Head Start is Social Emotional Competence

- By social competence is meant the child's everyday effectiveness in dealing with both present environment and later responsibilities in school and life

What is School Readiness?

- Head Start defines school readiness as children possessing the skills, knowledge, attitudes necessary for success in school and for late life

- The Head Start Approach to School Readiness means that children are ready for school, families are ready to support their children's learning, and schools are ready for children

Program Performance Pyramid Model

Developing Secure Attachments and Strong Relationships
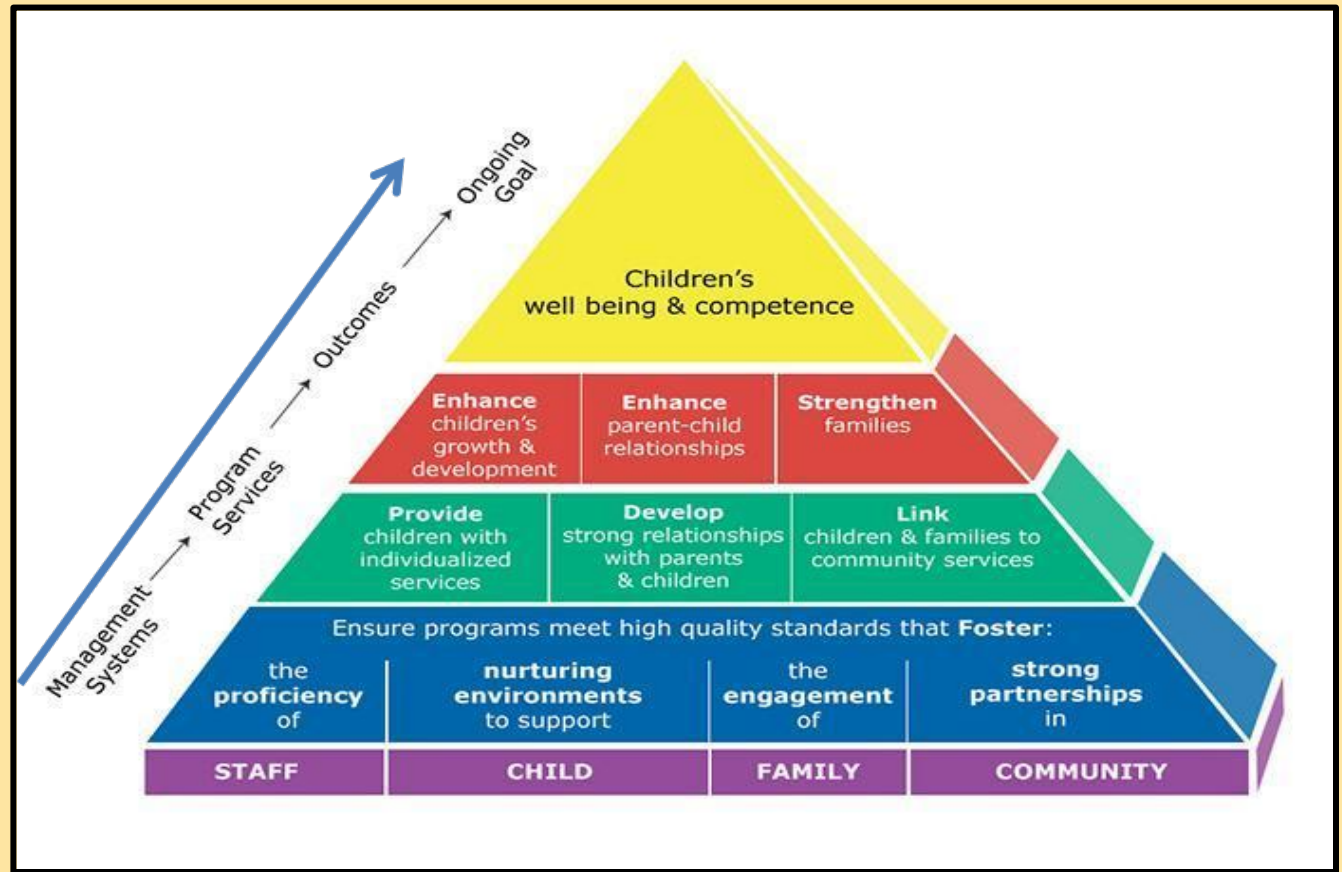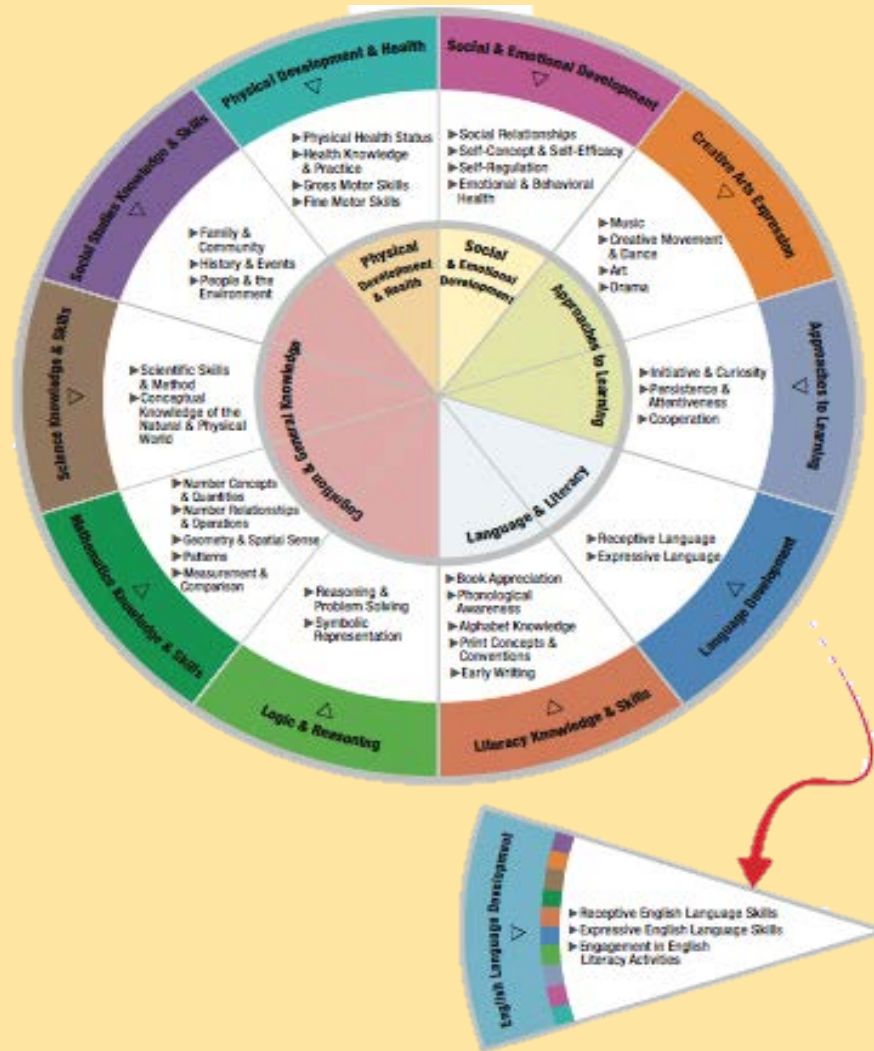
Full Group Exercise

- Write on the post-it note the first thing that comes to mind when you think of young African American boys.

- Fold post-it note and place in container

Research on Young Boys

Research indicates a 'crisis' in the education of young boys...

- Boys' academic achievement impacted more than girls' from stereotyping by teachers

- Pressure on young boys to be "masculine" reduces opportunities to develop a full range of social and emotional skills prized in preschool settings

- Classroom environments are better suited to girls

- Intersection of ethnicity and gender

(Hartley and Sutton, 2013)

Challenges Facing African American Men & Boys

- AA men age 18 and over, represent 5% of college student population, but 36% of prison population

- AA male unemployment rate is 13.5% vs. 6.2% for white males

- AA children expelled from preschool at twice the rate of whites; boys make up 91% of those expelled

(Gilliam, 2005)

Societal Climate

- Black boys are seen as older and less innocent; therefore they are not given the protections of childhood equally to their White same-age boys;

- Characteristics associated with childhood are applied less when thinking about Black boys relative to White boys;

- Black boys are perceived as more responsible for their actions and more appropriate targets for police violence;

- Black/ape association predicted actual racial disparities in police violence toward children.

(Goff, Jackson, Di Leone, Culotta, & DiTomasso, 2014)

Societal Climate

- Black men with darker skin were remembered as lighter when they were described as being educated, perpetuating social stereotypes and discrimination.

  (Ben-Zeev, Dennehy, Goodrich, Kolarik, & Geisler, 2014)

- Everyday interactions are loaded with assumptions made by mainstream society about the capabilities, motivations, and integrity of low-income children and African American boys.

  (Delpit, 1995)

Learning Climate

- Mismatch between teachers' perception of children's behavior as "out of control" and behavior that is typically part of boys' play. *(Barbarin, 2000)*

- African American boys are labeled as 'bad' and more often singled out for punishment and excluded (segregated) from small group work. *(Barbarin & Crawford, 2006; Smith, 2002)*

- In imaginative and expressive pretend play, teachers rated Black children as less prepared for school, less accepted by peers, and having more teacher-child conflict than non-Black children who had comparable levels of imagination and affect. *(Yates & Marcelo, 2014)*

Learning Climate

The combination of race, social class, and gender in early childhood puts African American boys at greater risk for school failure.

(Rashid, 2009)

Reflections

- Individually—in your small group—reflect on the societal and learning climates that we just talked about. Think about the personal and professional experiences that come to mind when thinking about African American young boys in these climates.

- Jot down your thoughts on the handout.

- Share in your small group.

- Each group shares one reflection with the whole group.

We need a paradigm shift in our thinking...

What is a paradigm shift?

What is a paradigm?

Deficit-Based Approach

- Focuses on the student/families as the major problem.

- Communicates that there is failure, helplessness, and low expectations for certain children, families and communities.

- Describes a list of things considered to be "wrong" with a child's learning and development or things a child cannot do.

Deficit-Based Approach (cont.)

- Blames the victims of institutional racism and oppression for their own victimization

- Fails to provide sufficient information about strengths and strategies to support a child's learning and development

The Strength-Based Approach:
The Paradigm Shift …
From *Deficit* thinking to *Strength-Based* Research and Practice (our attitudes and thinking)

Embracing A Strength-Based Approach

- This perspective replaces an emphasis on problems, vulnerabilities, and deficits

- Strength-based approaches are developmental and process-oriented

- It identifies and reveals a person's internal strengths and resources as they emerge in response to specific life challenges

Embracing A Strength-Based Approach (cont.)

- A **strength-based approach** is a positive psychology perspective that emphasizes the strengths, capabilities and resources of children and families.

- Those who embrace a strength-based perspective hold the belief that *all* children and their families have strengths, resources and the ability to recover from adversity.

(Cabrera, 2013; NCCLR; eLert 2005, NCCLR)

Embracing A Strength-Based Approach (cont.)

- Replaces an emphasis
  on problems, vulnerabilities, and deficits
- Are developmental and process-oriented
- Identifies and reveals a person's internal
  strengths and resources as
  they emerge in response to specific
  life challenges (Cabrera, 2013, NCCLR elert, 2014)

Where do we go from here?

Examine Your Own Beliefs and Biases

- Use self-reflection to develop an understanding of your own prejudices and stereotypes of African American men and boys

- Use self-reflection to increase awareness of gender discrimination and discrimination of African Americans men and boys in our society and schools

Culturally Responsive Caregiving, Teaching and Educating

Acknowledging the Disconnect

There is a **"real"** disconnect that exists in the understanding between teachers and children of color that is based on cultural differences and teacher expectations and their belief in the deficit theory without thinking about the societal and learning climate.

What is culture?

"The simplest definition of culture includes those values, beliefs, and practices shared by a group of people.."
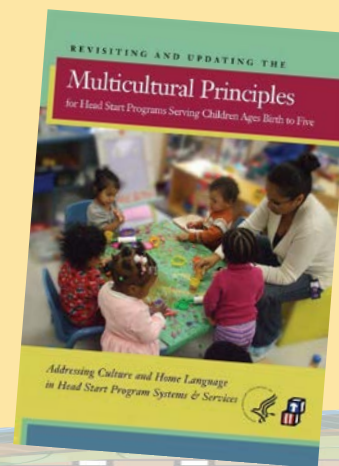
- Zieghan, L. 2001

Multicultural Principle #1

Every individual is rooted in culture.

Culturally Responsive Caregiving Starts With the Magic of Everyday Routines and Rituals

- Consider routines of infants and toddlers in your care…

- Consider how those routines promote secure attachments of infants and toddlers in your care…

- Consider Creative Transitions

©Photo courtesy of EHS NRC

Capacities and Competencies of Effective Teachers

✓ Express Interpersonal warmth

✓ Close positive emotional expression

✓ Believe that all children can learn and she/he (the teacher) is responsible for every child's achievement

✓ Set realistic, clear, age-appropriate expectations for behavior ('warm demanders' *(Irvine, 2003)*

✓ Are firm (but never harsh or cruel; do not scream or demean)

✓ Feel children's home culture and learning is a positive platform on which to build learning and teaching

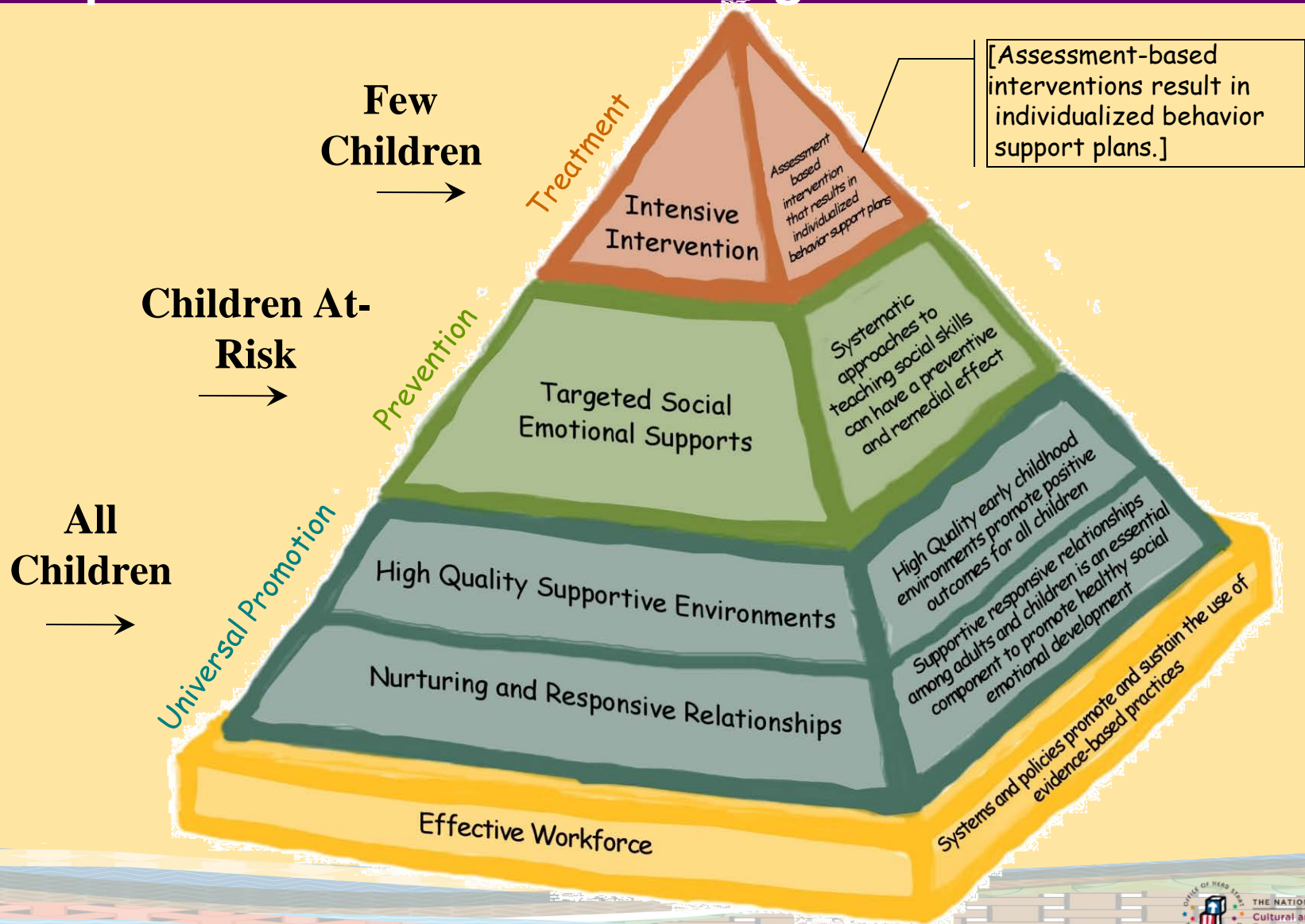✓ Use children's culture & language in teaching and learning *(Ray, 2011)*

Culturally Responsive Educators

Acknowledge the importance of social emotional development in Boys of Color

- Positive sense of self (Self-Concept)
- Knowledge of one's place in the world
- Sense of trust
- Emotionally warm and supportive relationship with teacher
- Emotional knowledge and regulations
- Regulation of attention and behavior
- Social skills, especially conflict resolution
- Positive peer relationships

— Barbarin (2011)

The Pyramid Model: Promoting Social Emotional Competence in Infants and Young Children

[Assessment-based interventions result in individualized behavior support plans.]

Few Children →

Children At-Risk →

All Children →

Treatment

Prevention

Universal Promotion

Intensive Intervention
Assessment based intervention that results in individualized behavior support plans

Targeted Social Emotional Supports
Systematic approaches to teaching social skills can have a preventive and remedial effect

High Quality Supportive Environments
High Quality early childhood environments promote positive outcomes for all children

Nurturing and Responsive Relationships
Supportive responsive relationships among adults and children is an essential component to promote healthy social emotional development

Effective Workforce
Systems and policies promote and sustain the use of evidence-based practices

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Cultivate A Strength-based Approach

- Value and build on the strengths that boys bring to the classroom. (Sprung, Froschl and Gropper, 2010)

- Make observations to learn strengths, interests, culture and language background.

- Connect children's home and classroom environments. *(Gonzalez, Moll and Amanti, 2000)*

- Make social and emotional development a priority. *(Gropper, Hinitz, Sprung and Froschl, 2011)*

What is "Funds of Knowledge"?

- Essential cultural and family practices and knowledge

- Constructed through social interaction and context

- Highlights awareness of one's own culturally based interaction patterns and how those may inhibit learning

Funds of Knowledge as Family Engagement

- Creates an ongoing, two-way communication

- Values families and staff as co-developing partners for school readiness programming

- Builds relationships that are dynamic and that mediate learning

Funds of Knowledge Categories

Child care – swaddling baby, giving baby pacifier

Household care – going to Laundromat, cooking

Family values and traditions – drinking tea before bed, Three Kings Day

Family entertainment – going to mall, playing video games

Friendship – visiting a friend's house

Travel – going to beach

Popular TV culture – watching Dora

Education – going to library, doing homework

Economics – looking at price tags

Scientific knowledge – preparing for tornado

Occupation of family members – branding animals, office routine, construction

School Readiness

Closing Reflections

- What did I feel?

- What will I do?

- What question(s) did this topic raise for me?

- What strategies, ideas, thoughts can I take back with me to use in my work?

Together We Can Make A Difference!

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Contact EHS NRC

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http://eclkc.ohs.acf.hhs.gov/hslc/tta-system/cultural-linguistic